



IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1-20. (cancelled)

21. (original) A method for extracting information pertaining to products for sale over the Internet, the method comprising the steps of:

mining information from the Internet to form a database having a hierarchical schema;
receiving text from a user as the exclusive form of user input, wherein the text is descriptive of the information sought;
acquiring a macro-context for the information based on the text;
locating the information that matches the macro-context in a database; and
presenting the information to a user.

22. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of combining relevant words in the text to form a micro-context representative of the information before the step of acquiring a macro-context for the information.

23. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of acquiring a macro-context for the information comprises comparing the micro-context to a corpus indexed by macro-context to determine the macro-context for the information.

24. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein the step of locating information that matches the macro-context in a database comprises searching through indices in the database corresponding to the macro-contexts and returning the information linked to indices which correlate to the macro-contexts.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of presenting the information to a user comprises presenting the information in a format selected by a user, the format being independent of the hierarchical schema of the database, for arranging the information.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of gathering additional information relevant to the text from the Internet.

27. (original) The method of claim 26, further comprising the step of tracking a user's navigation through the Internet to develop macro-contexts relevant to a user.

28. (original) The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of automatically updating the information periodically after the step of presenting the information to a user.

29. (new) A method providing a comparison of information pertaining to products for sale from a source accessible over the Internet, the comparison being independent of a hierarchy of arrangement of the source, the method comprising:

mining to gather and organize information from the Internet to form a database having a hierarchal schema;

acquiring a textual query from a user;

determining a micro-context of the textual query;

operating independent of the hierarchal schema to locate a subset of the information in the database, the subset corresponding to the micro-context; and

presenting the subset as a comparison, to a user.

30. (new) The method of claim 29, wherein determining a micro-context of the textual query comprises combining relevant words in the textual query to form a small, coherent group.

31. (new) The method of claim 30, wherein determining a micro-context of the textual query comprises combining relevant words in the textual query to form a coherent group of one to five words.

32. (new) The method of claim 30, wherein mining to gather and organize information from the Internet to form a database having a hierarchal schema comprises forming a database with samples of information, gathered from a corpus of information, indexed according to macro-context.

33. (new) The method of claim 32, wherein operating independent of the hierarchal schema to locate a subset of the information in the database comprises locating a subset of the information having a macro-context corresponding to the micro-context.

34. (new) The method of claim 33, wherein locating a subset of information having a macro-context corresponding to the micro-context comprises searching through the database and returning the information linked to indices which correlate to the macro-contexts.

35. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the step of presenting the subset of the information to a user comprises presenting the subset of the information in a format selected by a user, the format being independent of the hierarchical schema of the database.

36. (new) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of gathering additional information relevant to the textual query from the Internet.

37. (new) The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of tracking a user's navigation through the Internet to develop macro-contexts relevant to a user.

38. (new) The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of automatically updating the subset of the information periodically after the step of presenting the subset of the information to a user.

39. (new) A method providing a comparison of information pertaining to products for sale from a first source accessible over the Internet, the comparison being independent of a first hierarchy of arrangement of the first source, the method comprising:

- gathering and organizing the information from the Internet to form a database having a schema;
- acquiring a textual query from a user;
- determining a micro-context of the textual query;
- operating independent of the schema to locate a subset of the information in the database, the subset matching the micro-context;
- acquiring a second hierarchy of arrangement for the subset of the information from the user; and
- presenting the subset of information according to the second hierarchy of arrangement to the user.

40. (new) The method of claim 39, wherein gathering and organizing information from the Internet to form a database having a schema comprises forming a database with samples of information, gathered from a corpus of information, indexed according to macro-context and wherein operating independent of the schema to locate a subset of the information in the database comprises locating a subset of the information having a macro-context corresponding to the micro-context.